

Why 'Alianza' Flounders

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In retrospect, the striking spectacle of uncertainty, indecision and Harvard-flavored juvenile naivete by the Kennedy Administration in dealing with inter-American problems during its first 14 months on the New Frontier offers a sobering, partial explanation of U.S. floundering in Latin America.



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With the announced intention of strengthening inter-American bonds and warding off further Communist encroachment in the Western Hemisphere, President Kennedy began his occupancy of the White House by launching the hopeful and idealistic program called Alianza for Progress.

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This development program is sagging badly under the pressures in Latin America and confusion in administration of the project. And if the New Frontier's present course in Latin American affairs isn't revised soon, Mr. Kennedy and the United States are going in wind up with neither an alliance nor progress in the inter-American arena.

The Kennedy Administration has shown a preoccupation with Latin America, but in shotgun fashions -- with lit-

tle coordination. The State Department's bureau of inter-American affairs is running like a train with no engine, let alone an engineer. This has been permitted by President Kennedy for more than a year.

The experience of the inter-American affairs bureau since the New Frontiersmen moved into the inter-American scene is indicative of why this country has steadily lost ground in its Latin American relations.

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When President Kennedy took office, he inherited a capable, well-grounded assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Thomas C. Mann, who among other things was bilingual.

Then came the creation of a special Latin America task force, which along with a

cluster of "overnight experts" hovering around the White House and the United Nations, moved into a nebular policy-making outside the normal State Department channels. Mann and other qualified foreign service officers asked to be relieved.

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For several months, President Kennedy was unable to get anyone to replace Mann -- because of the outside influences of Richard Nathan Goodwin, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Adlai Stevenson, Adolf Berle Jr., and others. Meanwhile, the 30-year-old Goodwin emerged as President Kennedy's non-Spanish-speaking and inexperienced crown prince for inter-American affairs.

Last July, Robert F. Woodward, a career diplomat who has just been appointed ambassador to Chile, was tabbed to fill the long-vacant assistant secretaryship. By December it had become clear that Goodwin, who had become a deputy assistant secretary, was running the whole inter-American picture. Now Woodward has been replaced by Edwin M. Martin, an economic specialist with no Latin experience and no knowledge of Spanish. Confusion reigns.

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